



Testimony in Support of RB 400, ***AN ACT CONCERNING INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS.***

Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, Inc.
March 12, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Jesse White-Fresé; I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, a statewide organization that represents seventy-eight school based health centers in nineteen Connecticut communities. On behalf of the Association, we thank you for Raised Bill 400, *An Act Concerning Insurance Reimbursement Payments to School-Based Health Centers.*

Currently, School Based Health Center (SBHC) nurse practitioners are providing care to privately insured children, which accounts for 30% (39,300 visits) of the total number of annual visits in SBHCs statewide. In large part, these visits have not been reimbursed to school based health centers as they have not been deemed primary care provider status. However, a visit by these same children, seen at a Walgreen's Minute clinic by the same nurse practitioner for the same service would be reimbursable. While the Minute clinic is considered a reimbursable visit for routine or acute care, the comprehensive continuum of care provided at a SBHC does not fall into this same category. As these visits could account for over \$3.6 million in revenue for SBHCs, we would be remiss in this economy, and especially in light of the fact that SBHCs are facing a possible \$2.75 million reduction to their line item in the budget, not to pursue any possibility for reimbursements due us for services rendered.

We are currently involved in discussions with one private insurer and are hopeful that we will be able to negotiate SBHC contracts both with this insurer and with other insurance companies. Economically, it is essential that we proceed with any action that might ensure uninterrupted services to children that utilize the SBHCs. For most of the children and families we see, these services are vital to their survival. Without the SBHCs, many of these children end up filling our emergency rooms with non-urgent care at 16 times the cost of a school based health center visit. It is difficult to argue the cost savings differential between a school based health center and the emergency room. We know that in the last school year alone, we saved the health care system more than \$310,000 dollars when we provided 905 nebulizer treatments in school based health centers at a cost of \$47,200 vs. \$362,000 in emergency rooms. This is the time to seek revenue where we can to support essential health care services for children. Raised Bill 400 provides an opportunity for school based health centers to be reimbursed for those services.

On behalf of the member communities of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, we thank you for your willingness to support the concept of RB 400, and we thank the commercial insurers for their interest in addressing this issue through non-legislative means.

Healthy Kids Make Better Learners